

DESPITE A CAREER TAKE-OFF IN 'BUCK ROGERS'... Erin Gray's feet are planted firmly on the ground

After fighting through the 25th Century, Erin Gray is down-to-earth about her own future

In 1978, Erin Gray, star of Nine network's "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century", traded in a six-figure income and a successful New York modelling career for a seven-year studio contract and an uncertain future in Hollywood.

Erin's first break came just three weeks into her contract when she won a co-starring role opposite Glenn Ford in the movie "Evening in Byzantium". Then came "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century".

"I finished 'Byzantium' at 6am one Wednesday, tested for 'Buck Rogers' and went to work the following Monday," Erin said.

Doing the series, the actress said, was great fun. "I remember going on the set for the first time," said Erin. "There I was, slinging a gun, wearing my helmet and spacesuit, and climbing into my spaceship with all those wonderful buttons to shoot down the enemy. It was pure fantasy and I had a ball!"

Acting is her priority, but Erin continues to model part-time, having recently signed a lucrative contract to promote a cosmetic line.

"The only way I can be selective about the roles I choose to play is to have some financial security," she said. "I don't have to work for the money for the next two years and, as a result, my work is improving in leaps and bounds."

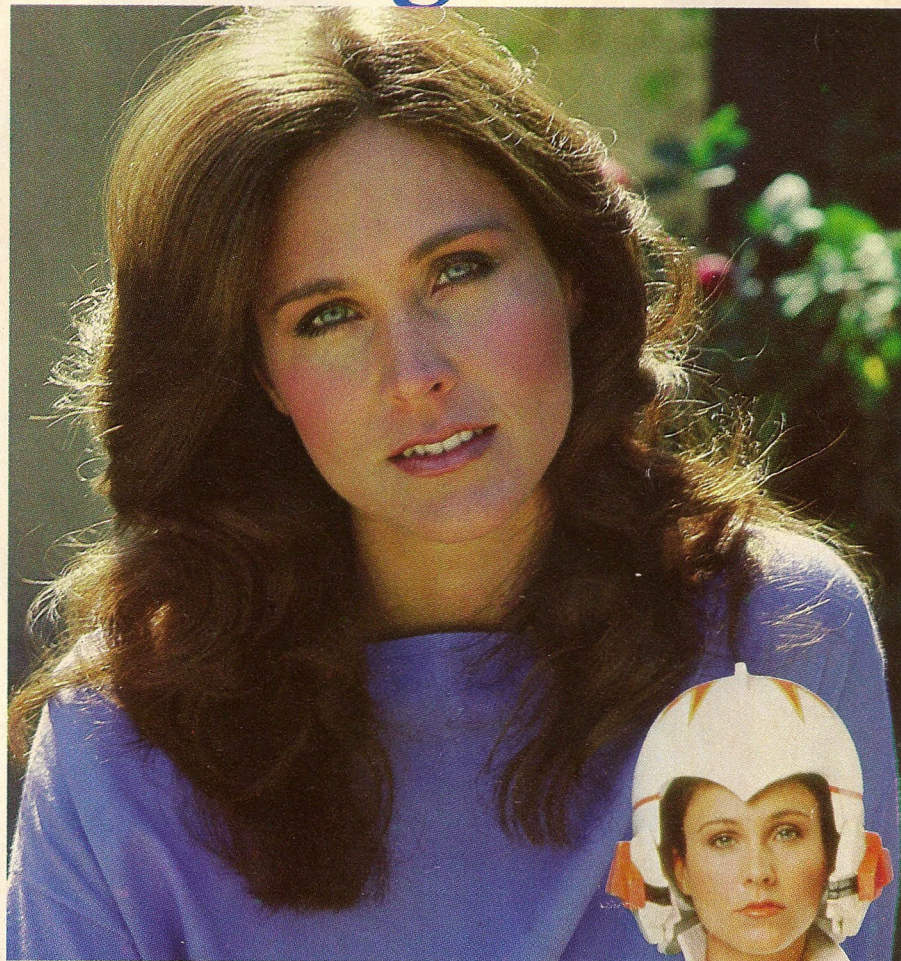
A model since she was 14, Erin feels there is a lot to be said for the profession.

"Modelling can be extremely glamorous and a terrific way for a woman to make money," she said. "It's an opportunity for travel and financial security that most women wouldn't be able to have at an early age."

Married to her high school sweetheart, Kenneth Schwartz, Erin is the mother of Kevan, 5.

Though the family share a four-bedroom home in Studio City, California, they spend as much time as possible on their 200ha farm in upstate New York.

"My farm is probably the most beautiful place in the world to me," she said. "In fact, my husband and I have



Erin Gray at home and (right) as Colonel Wilma Deering, Buck Rogers' slinky galactic off-sider.

come to a point where we know in our hearts that if things got really bad and the world became too much for us, we'd go to the farm before making any major decisions."

While meeting the demands of both a family and a career can be difficult, Erin feels it's important to have those conflicts.

"When I'm at home in the evenings I'm busily cooking meals, serving my family, and I feel fulfilled. But on the other hand," she added, "between 9am and 5pm I need a project to work on. During the day I like to be strong and carry the world on my shoulders."

Since "Buck Rogers", Erin Gray has been anxious to move on to other projects. "I want to grow as an actress," she said. "I'm so hungry for it, I can't stand it!"

— TERESA BURKE

